THE KING'S MISSIVE

AND OTHER POEMS

JOHN G. WHITTIER

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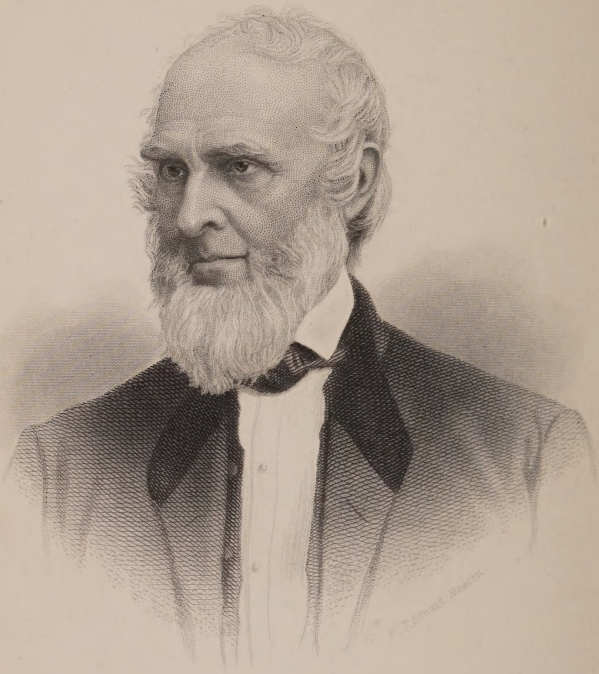

Yours truly

John G. Shortle

THE KING'S MISSIVE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

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THE PRELUDE.

I SPREAD a scanty board too late;
The old-time guests for whom I wait
  Come few and slow, methinks, to-day.
Ah! who could hear my messages
Across the dim unsounded seas
  On which so many have sailed away!

Come, then, old friends, who linger yet,
And let us meet, as we have met,
  Once more beneath this low sunshine;
And grateful for the good we 've known,
The riddles solved, the ills outgrown,
  Shake hands upon the border-line.

The favor, asked too oft before,
From your indulgent ears, once more
I crave, and, if belated lays
To slower, feebler measures move,
The silent sympathy of love
To me is dearer now than praise.

And ye, O younger friends, for whom
My hearth and heart keep open room,
Come smiling through the shadows long,
Be with me while the sun goes down,
And with your cheerful voices drown
The minor of my even-song.

For, equal through the day and night,
The wise Eternal oversight
And love and power and righteous will
Remain: the law of destiny
The best for each and all must be,
And life its promise shall fulfil.

THE KING'S MISSIVE.[1]

1661.

UNDER the great hill sloping bare
To cove and meadow and Common lot,
In his council chamber and oaken chair,
Sat the worshipful Governor Endicott.
A grave, strong man, who knew no peer
In the pilgrim land, where he ruled in fear
Of God, not man, and for good or ill
Held his trust with an iron will.

He had shorn with his sword the cross from out
The flag, and cloven the May-pole down,

[1] See Note.

Harried the heathen round about,
And whipped the Quakers from town to town.
Earnest and honest, a man at need
To burn like a torch for his own harsh creed,
He kept with the flaming brand of his zeal
The gate of the holy common weal.

His brow was clouded, his eye was stern,
With a look of mingled sorrow and wrath;
"Woe's me!" he murmured: "at every turn
The pestilent Quakers are in my path!
Some we have scourged, and banished some.
Some hanged, more doomed, and still they come,
Fast as the tide of yon bay sets in,
Sowing their heresy's seed of sin.

"Did we count on this? Did we leave behind
The graves of our kin, the comfort and ease

Of our English hearths and homes, to find
Troublers of Israel such as these?
Shall I spare? Shall I pity them? God
forbid!
I will do as the prophet to Agag did:
They come to poison the wells of the Word,
I will hew them in pieces before the Lord!"

The door swung open, and Rawson the clerk
Entered, and whispered under breath, —
"There waits below for the hangman's work
A fellow banished on pain of death —
Shattuck, of Salem, unhealed of the whip,
Brought over in Master Goldsmith's ship
At anchor here in a Christian port,
With freight of the devil and all his sort!"

Twice and thrice on the chamber floor
Striding fiercely from wall to wall,
"The Lord do so to me and more,"
The Governor cried, "if I hang not all!

Bring hither the Quaker." Calm, sedate,
With the look of a man at ease with fate,
Into that presence grim and dread
Came Samuel Shattuck, with hat on head.

"Off with the knave's hat!" An angry hand
Smote down the offence; but the wearer said,
With a quiet smile, "By the king's command
I bear his message and stand in his stead."
In the Governor's hand a missive he laid
With the royal arms on its seal displayed,
And the proud man spake, as he gazed thereat,
Uncovering, "Give Mr. Shattuck his hat."

He turned to the Quaker, bowing low, —
"The king commandeth your friends' release,
Doubt not he shall be obeyed, although
To his subjects' sorrow and sin's increase.

What he here enjoineth, John Endicott,
His loyal servant, questioneth not.
You are free! God grant the spirit you own
May take you from us to parts unknown."

So the door of the jail was open cast,
And, like Daniel, out of the lion's den
Tender youth and girlhood passed,
With age-bowed women and gray-locked men.
And the voice of one appointed to die
Was lifted in praise and thanks on high,
And the little maid from New Netherlands
Kissed, in her joy, the doomed man's hands.

And one, whose call was to minister
To the souls in prison, beside him went,
An ancient woman, bearing with her
The linen shroud for his burial meant.
For she, not counting her own life dear,
In the strength of a love that cast out fear,

Had watched and served where her brethren
died,
Like those who waited the cross beside.

One moment they paused on their way to look
On the martyr graves by the Common side,
And much scourged Wharton of Salem took
His burden of prophecy up and cried:
"Rest, souls of the valiant! Not in vain
Have ye borne the Master's cross of pain;
Ye have fought the fight, ye are victors
crowned,
With a fourfold chain ye have Satan bound!"

The autumn haze lay soft and still
On wood and meadow and upland farms;
On the brow of Snow Hill the great windmill
Slowly and lazily swung its arms;
Broad in the sunshine stretched away,
With its capes and islands, the turquoise bay;

And over water and dusk of pines
Blue hills lifted their faint outlines.

The topaz leaves of the walnut glowed,
The sumach added its crimson fleck,
And double in air and water showed
The tinted maples along the Neck;
Through frost flower clusters of pale star-mist,
And gentian fringes of amethyst,
And royal plumes of golden-rod,
The grazing cattle on Centry trod.

But as they who see not, the Quakers saw
The world about them; they only thought
With deep thanksgiving and pious awe
On the great deliverance God had wrought.
Through lane and alley the gazing town
Noisily followed them up and down;
Some with scoffing and brutal jeer,
Some with pity and words of cheer.

One brave voice rose above the din.
Upsall, gray with his length of days,
Cried from the door of his Red Lion Inn:
"Men of Boston, give God the praise!
No more shall innocent blood call down
The bolts of wrath on your guilty town.
The freedom of worship, dear to you,
Is dear to all, and to all is due.

"I see the vision of days to come,
When your beautiful City of the Bay
Shall be Christian liberty's chosen home,
And none shall his neighbor's rights gainsay.
The varying notes of worship shall blend
And as one great prayer to God ascend,
And hands of mutual charity raise
Walls of salvation and gates of praise."

So passed the Quakers through Boston town,
Whose painful ministers sighed to see

The walls of their sheep-fold falling down,
And wolves of heresy prowling free.
But the years went on, and brought no wrong;
With milder counsels the State grew strong,
As outward Letter and inward Light
Kept the balance of truth aright.

The Puritan spirit perishing not,
To Concord's yeomen the signal sent,
And spake in the voice of the cannon-shot
That severed the chains of a continent.
With its gentler mission of peace and good-will
The thought of the Quaker is living still,
And the freedom of soul he prophesied
Is gospel and law where the martyrs died.

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.[2]

THOUGH flowers have perished at the touch
  Of Frost, the early comer,
I hail the season loved so much,
  The good St. Martin's summer.

O gracious morn, with rose-red dawn,
  And thin moon curving o'er it!
The old year's darling, latest born,
  More loved than all before it!

How flamed the sunrise through the pines!
  How stretched the birchen shadows,
Braiding in long, wind-wavered lines
  The westward sloping meadows!

[2] See Note.

The sweet day, opening as a flower
Unfolds its petals tender,
Renews for us at noontide's hour
The summer's tempered splendor.

The birds are hushed; alone the wind,
That through the woodland searches,
The red-oak's lingering leaves can find,
And yellow plumes of larches.

But still the balsam-breathing pine
Invites no thought of sorrow,
No hint of loss from air like wine
The earth's content can borrow.

The summer and the winter here
Midway a truce are holding,
A soft, consenting atmosphere
Their tents of peace enfolding.

The silent woods, the lonely hills,
Rise solemn in their gladness;
The quiet that the valley fills
Is scarcely joy or sadness.

How strange! The autumn yesterday
In winter's grasp seemed dying;
On whirling winds from skies of gray
The early snow was flying.

And now, while over Nature's mood
There steals a soft relenting,
I will not mar the present good,
Forecasting or lamenting.

My autumn time and Nature's hold
A dreamy tryst together,
And, both grown old, about us fold
The golden-tissued weather.

I lean my heart against the day
To feel its bland caressing;
I will not let it pass away
Before it leaves its blessing.

God's angels come not as of old
The Syrian shepherds knew them;
In reddening dawns, in sunset gold,
And warm noon lights I view them.

Nor need there is, in times like this
When heaven to earth draws nearer,
Of wing or song as witnesses
To make their presence clearer.

O stream of life, whose swifter flow
Is of the end forewarning,
Methinks thy sundown afterglow
Seems less of night than morning!

Old cares grow light; aside I lay
The doubts and fears that troubled;
The quiet of the happy day
Within my soul is doubled.

That clouds must veil this fair sunshine
Not less a joy I find it;
Nor less yon warm horizon line
That winter lurks behind it.

The mystery of the untried days
I close my eyes from reading;
His will be done whose darkest ways
To light and life are leading!

Less drear the winter night shall be,
If memory cheer and hearten
Its heavy hours with thoughts of thee,
Sweet summer of St. Martin!

THE DEAD FEAST OF THE KOL-FOLK.[3]

CHOTA NAGPOOR.

WE have opened the door,
Once, twice, thrice!
We have swept the floor,
We have boiled the rice.
Come hither, come hither!
Come from the far lands,
Come from the star lands,
Come as before!
We lived long together,
We loved one another;
Come back to our life.
Come father, come mother,

[3] See Note.

Come sister and brother,
Child, husband, and wife,
For you we are sighing.
Come take your old places,
Come look in our faces,
The dead on the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door,
Once, twice, thrice!
We have kindled the coals,
And we boil the rice
For the feast of souls.
Come hither, come hither!
Think not we fear you,
Whose hearts are so near you.
Come tenderly thought on,
Come all unforgotten,
Come from the shadow-lands,
From the dim meadow-lands

Where the pale grasses bend
Low to our sighing.
Come father, come mother,
Come sister and brother,
Come husband and friend,
The dead to the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door
You entered so oft;
For the feast of souls
We have kindled the coals,
And we boil the rice soft.
Come you who are dearest
To us who are nearest,
Come hither, come hither,
From out the wild weather;
The storm clouds are flying,
The peepul is sighing;
Come in from the rain.

Come father, come mother,
Come sister and brother,
Come husband and lover,
Beneath our roof-cover.
Look on us again,
The dead on the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door!
For the feast of souls
We have kindled the coals
We may kindle no more!
Snake, fever, and famine,
The curse of the Brahmin,
The sun and the dew,
They burn us, they bite us,
They waste us and smite us;
Our days are but few!
In strange lands far yonder
To wonder and wander
We hasten to you.

List then to our sighing,
While yet we are here:
Nor seeing nor hearing,
We wait without fearing,
To feel you draw near.
O dead to the dying
Come home!

THE LOST OCCASION.

Some die too late and some too soon,
At early morning, heat of noon,
Or the chill evening twilight. Thou,
Whom the rich heavens did so endow
With eyes of power and Jove's own brow,
With all the massive strength that fills
Thy home-horizon's granite hills,
With rarest gifts of heart and head
From manliest stock inherited
New England's stateliest type of man,
In port and speech Olympian;
Whom no one met, at first, but took
A second awed and wondering look
(As turned, perchance, the eyes of Greece
On Phidias' unveiled masterpiece);

Whose words, in simplest home-spun clad,
The Saxon strength of Cædmon's had,
With power reserved at need to reach
The Roman forum's loftiest speech,
Sweet with persuasion, eloquent
In passion, cool in argument,
Or, ponderous, falling on thy foes
As fell the Norse god's hammer blows,
Crushing as if with Talus' flail
Through Error's logic-woven mail,
And failing only when they tried
The adamant of the righteous side, —
Thou, foiled in aim and hope, bereaved
Of old friends, by the new deceived,
Too soon for us, too soon for thee,
Beside thy lonely Northern sea,
Where long and low the marsh-lands spread,
Laid wearily down thy august head.

Thou shouldst have lived to feel below
Thy feet Disunion's fierce upthrow, —

The late-sprung mine that underlaid
Thy sad concessions vainly made.
Thou shouldst have seen from Sumter's wall
The star-flag of the Union fall,
And armed Rebellion pressing on
The broken lines of Washington!
No stronger voice than thine had then
Called out the utmost might of men,
To make the Union's charter free
And strengthen law by liberty.
How had that stern arbitrament
To thy gray age youth's vigor lent,
Shaming ambition's paltry prize
Before thy disillusioned eyes;
Breaking the spell about thee wound
Like the green withes that Samson bound;
Redeeming, in one effort grand,
Thyself and thy imperilled land!
Ah, cruel fate, that closed to thee,
O sleeper by the Northern sea,
The gates of opportunity!

God fills the gaps of human need,
Each crisis brings its word and deed.
Wise men and strong we did not lack;
But still, with memory turning back,
In the dark hours we thought of thee,
And thy lone grave beside the sea.

Above that grave the east winds blow,
And from the marsh-lands drifting slow
The sea-fog comes, with evermore
The wave-wash of a lonely shore,
And sea-bird's melancholy cry,
As Nature fain would typify
The sadness of a closing scene,
The loss of that which should have been.
But, where thy native mountains bare
Their foreheads to diviner air,
Fit emblem of enduring fame,
One lofty summit keeps thy name.
For thee the cosmic forces did
The rearing of that pyramid,

The prescient ages shaping with
Fire, flood, and frost thy monolith.
Sunrise and sunset lay thereon
With hands of light their benison,
The stars of midnight pause to set
Their jewels in its coronet.
And evermore that mountain mass
Seems climbing from the shadowy pass
To light, as if to manifest
Thy nobler self, thy life at best!

THE EMANCIPATION GROUP.

Boston, 1879.

Amidst thy sacred effigies
Of old renown give place,
O city, Freedom-loved! to his
Whose hand unchained a race.

Take the worn frame, that rested not
Save in a martyr's grave —
The care-lined face, that none forgot,
Bent to the kneeling slave.

Let man be free! The mighty word
He spake was not his own;
An impulse from the Highest stirred
These chiselled lips alone.

The cloudy sign, the fiery guide,
Along his pathway ran,
And Nature, through his voice, denied
The ownership of man.

We rest in peace where these sad eyes
Saw peril, strife, and pain;
His was the nation's sacrifice,
And ours the priceless gain.

O symbol of God's will on earth
As it is done above!
Bear witness to the cost and worth
Of justice and of love.

Stand in thy place and testify
To coming ages long,
That truth is stronger than a lie,
And righteousness than wrong.

THE JUBILEE SINGERS.

Voice of a people suffering long,
The pathos of their mournful song,
The sorrow of their night of wrong!

Their cry like that which Israel gave,
A prayer for one to guide and save,
Like Moses by the Red Sea's wave!

The stern accord her timbrel lent
To Miriam's note of triumph sent
O'er Egypt's sunken armament!

The tramp that startled camp and town,
And shook the walls of Slavery down,
The spectral march of old John Brown!

The storm that swept through battle-days,
The triumph after long delays,
The bondmen giving God the praise!

Voice of a ransomed race, sing on
Till Freedom's every right is won,
And Slavery's every wrong undone!

WITHIN THE GATE.

L. M. C.

We sat together, last May-day, and talked
Of the dear friends who walked
Beside us, sharers of the hopes and fears
Of five and forty years

Since first we met in Freedom's hope forlorn,
And heard her battle-horn
Sound through the valleys of the sleeping North,
Calling her children forth,

And youth pressed forward with hope-lighted eyes,
And age, with forecast wise

Of the long strife before the triumph won,
Girded his armor on.

Sadly, as name by name we called the roll,
We heard the dead-bells toll
For the unanswering many, and we knew
The living were the few.

And we, who waited our own call before
The inevitable door,
Listened and looked, as all have done, to win
Some token from within.

No sign we saw, we heard no voices call;
The impenetrable wall
Cast down its shadow, like an awful doubt,
On all who sat without.

Of many a hint of life beyond the veil,
And many a ghostly tale

Wherewith the ages spanned the gulf between
The seen and the unseen,

Seeking from omen, trance, and dream to gain
Solace to doubtful pain,
And touch, with groping hands, the garment hem
Of truth sufficing them,

We talked; and, turning from the sore unrest
Of an all-baffling quest,
We thought of holy lives that from us passed
Hopeful unto the last,

As if they saw beyond the river of death,
Like him of Nazareth,
The many mansions of the Eternal days
Lift up their gates of praise.

And, hushed to silence by a reverent awe,
Methought, O friend, I saw

In thy true life of word, and work, and thought
The proof of all we sought.

Did we not witness in the life of thee
Immortal prophecy?
And feel, when with thee, that thy footsteps trod
An everlasting road?

Not for brief days thy generous sympathies,
Thy scorn of selfish ease;
Not for the poor prize of an earthly goal
Thy strong uplift of soul.

Than thine was never turned a fonder heart
To nature and to art
In fair-formed Hellas in her golden prime,
Thy Philothea's time.

Yet, loving beauty, thou couldst pass it by,
And for the poor deny
Thyself, and see thy fresh, sweet flower of fame
Wither in blight and blame.

Sharing His love who holds in His embrace
The lowliest of our race,
Sure the Divine economy must be
Conservative of thee!

For truth must live with truth, self-sacrifice
Seek out its great allies;
Good must find good by gravitation sure,
And love with love endure.

And so, since thou hast passed within the gate
Whereby awhile I wait,
I give blind grief and blinder sense the lie:
Thou hast not lived to die!

THE KHAN'S DEVIL.

The Khan came from Bokhara town
To Hamza, santon of renown.

"My head is sick, my hands are weak;
Thy help, O holy man, I seek."

In silence marking for a space
The Khan's red eyes and purple face,

Thick voice, and loose, uncertain tread,
"Thou hast a devil!" Hamza said.

"Allah forbid!" exclaimed the Khan.
"Rid me of him at once, O man!"

"Nay," Hamza said, "no spell of mine
Can slay that cursed thing of thine.

"Leave feast and wine, go forth and drink
Water of healing on the brink

"Where clear and cold from mountain snows,
The Nahr el Zeben downward flows.

"Six moons remain, then come to me;
May Allah's pity go with thee!"

Awe-struck, from feast and wine, the Khan
Went forth where Nahr el Zeben ran.

Roots were his food, the desert dust
His bed, the water quenched his thirst,

And when the sixth moon's scimetar
Curved sharp above the evening star,

He sought again the santon's door,
Not weak and trembling as before,

But strong of limb and clear of brain;
"Behold," he said, "the fiend is slain."

"Nay," Hamza answered, "starved and drowned,
The curst one lies in death-like swound.

"But evil breaks the strongest gyves,
And jins like him have charmed lives.

"One beaker of the juice of grape
May call him up in living shape.

"When the red wine of Badakshan
Sparkles for thee, beware, O Khan!

"With water quench the fire within,
And drown each day thy devilkin!"

Thenceforth the great Khan shunned the cup
As Shitan's own, though offered up,

With laughing eyes and jewelled hands,
By Yarkand's maids and Samarcand's.

And, in the lofty vestibule
Of the medress of Kaush Kodul,

The students of the holy law
A golden-lettered tablet saw,

With these words, by a cunning hand,
Graved on it at the Khan's command:

"In Allah's name, to him who hath
A devil, Khan el Hamed saith,

"Wisely our Prophet cursed the vine:
The fiend that loves the breath of wine

"No prayer can slay, no marabout
Nor Meccan dervis can drive out.

"I, Khan el Hamed, know the charm
That robs him of his power to harm.

"Drown him, O Islam's child! the spell
To save thee lies in tank and well!"

ABRAM MORRISON.

'Midst the men and things which will
Haunt an old man's memory still,
Drollest, quaintest of them all,
With a boy's laugh I recall
Good old Abram Morrison.

When the Grist and Rolling Mill
Ground and rumbled by Po Hill,
And the old red school-house stood
Midway in the Powow's flood,
Here dwelt Abram Morrison.

From the Beach to far beyond
Bear-Hill, Lion's Mouth and Pond,

Marvellous to our tough old stock,
Chips o' the Anglo-Saxon block,
Seemed the Celtic Morrison.

Mudknock, Balmawhistle, all
Only knew the Yankee drawl,
Never brogue was heard till when,
Foremost of his countrymen,
Hither came Friend Morrison;

Yankee born, of alien blood,
Kin of his had well withstood
Pope and King with pike and ball
Under Derry's leaguered wall,
As became the Morrisons.

Wandering down from Nutfield woods
With his household and his goods,
Never was it clearly told
How within our quiet fold
Came to be a Morrison.

Once a soldier, blame him not
That the Quaker he forgot,
When, to think of battles won,
And the red-coats on the run,
Laughed aloud Friend Morrison.

From gray Lewis over sea
Bore his sires their family tree,
On the rugged boughs of it
Grafting Irish mirth and wit,
And the brogue of Morrison.

Half a genius, quick to plan,
Blundering like an Irishman,
But with canny shrewdness lent
By his far-off Scotch descent,
Such was Abram Morrison.

Back and forth to daily meals,
Rode his cherished pig on wheels,

And to all who came to see:
"Aisier for the pig an' me,
Sure it is," said Morrison.

Simple-hearted, boy o'er-grown,
With a humor quite his own,
Of our sober-stepping ways,
Speech and look and cautious phrase,
Slow to learn was Morrison.

Much we loved his stories told
Of a country strange and old,
Where the fairies danced till dawn,
And the goblin Leprecaun
Looked, we thought, like Morrison.

Or wild tales of feud and fight,
Witch and troll and second sight
Whispered still where Stornoway
Looks across its stormy bay,
Once the home of Morrisons.

First was he to sing the praise
Of the Powow's winding ways;
And our straggling village took
City grandeur to the look
Of its poet Morrison.

All his words have perished. Shame
On the saddle-bags of Fame,
That they bring not to our time
One poor couplet of the rhyme
Made by Abram Morrison!

When, on calm and fair First Days,
Rattled down our one-horse chaise
Through the blossomed apple-boughs
To the old, brown meeting-house,
There was Abram Morrison.

Underneath his hat's broad brim
Peered the queer old face of him;

And with Irish jauntiness
Swung the coat-tails of the dress
Worn by Abram Morrison.

Still, in memory, on his feet,
Leaning o'er the elders' seat,
Mingling with a solemn drone,
Celtic accents all his own,
Rises Abram Morrison.

"Don't," he 's pleading, "don't ye go,
Dear young friends, to sight and show;
Don't run after elephants,
Learned pigs and presidents
And the likes!" said Morrison.

On his well-worn theme intent,
Simple, child-like, innocent,
Heaven forgive the half-checked smile
Of our careless boyhood, while
Listening to Friend Morrison!

We have learned in later days
Truth may speak in simplest phrase;
That the man is not the less
For quaint ways and home-spun dress,
Thanks to Abram Morrison!

Not to pander nor to please
Come the needed homilies,
With no lofty argument
Is the fitting message sent
Through such lips as Morrison's.

Dead and gone! But while its track
Powow keeps to Merrimack,
While Po Hill is still on guard,
Looking land and ocean ward,
They shall tell of Morrison!

After half a century's lapse,
We are wiser now, perhaps,

But we miss our streets amid
Something which the past has hid,
Lost with Abram Morrison.

Gone forever with the queer
Characters of that old year!
Now the many are as one;
Broken is the mould that run
Men like Abram Morrison.

VOYAGE OF THE JETTIE.[4]

A SHALLOW stream, from fountains
Deep in the Sandwich mountains,
  Ran lakeward Bearcamp River;
And, between its flood-torn shores,
Sped by sail or urged by oars
  No keel had vexed it ever.

Alone the dead trees yielding
To the dull axe Time is wielding,
  The shy mink and the otter,
And golden leaves and red,
By countless autumns shed,
  Had floated down its water.

[4] See Note.

From the gray rocks of Cape Ann,
Came a skilled sea-faring man,
With his dory, to the right place;
Over hill and plain he brought her,
Where the boatless Bearcamp water
Comes winding down from White-Face.

Quoth the skipper: "Ere she floats forth,
I 'm sure my pretty boat 's worth
At least, a name as pretty."
On her painted side he wrote it,
And the flag that o'er her floated
Bore aloft the name of Jettie.

On a radiant morn of summer,
Elder guest and latest comer
Saw her wed the Bearcamp water;
Heard the name the skipper gave her,
And the answer to the favor
From the Bay State's graceful daughter.

Then, a singer, richly gifted,
Her charmèd voice uplifted;
And the wood-thrush and song-sparrow,
Listened, dumb with envious pain,
To the clear and sweet refrain
Whose notes they could not borrow.

Then the skipper plied his oar,
And from off the shelving shore,
Glided out the strange explorer;
Floating on, she knew not whither,—
The tawny sands beneath her,
The great hills watching o'er her.

On, where the stream flows quiet
As the meadows margins by it,
Or widens out to borrow a
New life from that wild water,
The mountain giant's daughter,
The pine-besung Chocorua.

Or, mid the tangling cumber
And pack of mountain lumber
That spring floods downward force,
Over sunken snag, and bar
Where the grating shallows are,
The good boat held her course.

Under the pine-dark highlands,
Around the vine-hung islands,
She ploughed her crooked furrow;
And her rippling and her lurches
Scared the river eels and perches,
And the musk-rat in his burrow.

Every sober clam below her,
Every sage and grave pearl-grower,
Shut his rusty valves the tighter;
Crow called to crow complaining,
And old tortoises sat craning
Their leathern necks to sight her.

So, to where the still lake glasses
The misty mountain masses
  Rising dim and distant northward,
And, with faint-drawn shadow pictures,
Low shores, and dead pine spectres,
  Blends the skyward and the earthward,

On she glided, overladen,
With merry man and maiden
  Sending back their song and laughter, —
While, perchance, a phantom crew,
In a ghostly birch canoe,
  Paddled dumb and swiftly after!

And the bear on Ossipee
Climbed the topmost crag to see
  The strange thing drifting under;
And, through the haze of August,
Passaconaway and Paugus
  Looked down in sleepy wonder.

All the pines that o'er her hung
In mimic sea-tones sung
The song familiar to her;
And the maples leaned to screen her,
And the meadow-grass seemed greener,
And the breeze more soft to woo her.

The lone stream mystery-haunted,
To her the freedom granted
To scan its every feature,
Till new and old were blended,
And round them both extended
The loving arms of Nature.

Of these hills the little vessel
Henceforth is part and parcel;
And on Bearcamp shall her log
Be kept, as if by George's
Or Grand Menàn, the surges
Tossed her skipper through the fog.

And I, who, half in sadness,
Recall the morning gladness
  Of life, at evening time,
By chance, onlooking idly,
Apart from all so widely,
  Have set her voyage to rhyme.

Dies now the gay persistence
Of song and laugh, in distance;
  Alone with me remaining
The stream, the quiet meadow,
The hills in shine and shadow,
  The sombre pines complaining.

And, musing here, I dream
Of voyagers on a stream
  From whence is no returning,
Under sealèd orders going,
Looking forward little knowing,
  Looking back with idle yearning.

And I pray that every venture
The port of peace may enter,
That, safe from snag and fall
And siren-haunted islet,
And rock, the Unseen Pilot
May guide us one and all.

OUR AUTOCRAT.

Read at Dr. Holmes' Breakfast.

His laurels fresh from song and lay,
Romance, art, science, rich in all,
And young of heart, how dare we say
We keep his seventieth festival?

No sense is here of loss or lack;
Before his sweetness and his light
The dial holds its shadow back,
The charmèd hours delay their flight.

His still the keen analysis
Of men and moods, electric wit,
Free play of mirth, and tenderness
To heal the slightest wound from it.

And his the pathos touching all
Life's sins and sorrows and regrets,
Its hopes and fears, its final call
And rest beneath the violets.

His sparkling surface scarce betrays
The thoughtful tide beneath it rolled, —
The wisdom of the latter days,
And tender memories of the old.

What shapes and fancies, grave or gay,
Before us at his bidding come!
The Treadmill tramp, the One-Horse Shay,
The dumb despair of Elsie's doom!

The tale of Avis and the Maid,
The plea for lips that cannot speak,
The holy kiss that Iris laid
On Little Boston's pallid cheek!

Long may he live to sing for us
His sweetest songs at evening time,
And, like his Chambered Nautilus,
To holier heights of beauty climb!

Though now unnumbered guests surround
The table that he rules at will,
Its Autocrat, however crowned,
Is but our friend and comrade still.

The world may keep his honored name,
The wealth of all his varied powers;
A stronger claim has love than fame,
And he himself is only ours!

GARRISON.

THE storm and peril overpast,
The hounding hatred shamed and still,
Go, soul of freedom! take at last
The place which thou alone canst fill.

Confirm the lesson taught of old —
Life saved for self is lost, while they
Who lose it in His service hold
The lease of God's eternal day.

Not for thyself, but for the slave
Thy words of thunder shook the world;
No selfish griefs or hatred gave
The strength wherewith thy bolts were hurled.

From lips that Sinai's trumpet blew
We heard a tender undersong;
Thy very wrath from pity grew,
From love of man thy hate of wrong.

Now past and present are as one;
The life below is life above;
Thy mortal years have but begun
The immortality of love.

With somewhat of thy lofty faith
We lay thy outworn garment by,
Give death but what belongs to death,
And life the life that cannot die!

Not for a soul like thine the calm
Of selfish ease and joys of sense;
But duty, more than crown or palm,
Its own exceeding recompense.

Go up and on! thy day well done,
Its morning promise well fulfilled,
Arise to triumphs yet unwon,
To holier tasks that God has willed.

Go, leave behind thee all that mars
The work below of man for man;
With the white legions of the stars
Do service such as angels can.

Wherever wrong shall right deny
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,
Be thine a voice to smite the lie,
A hand to set the captive free!

BAYARD TAYLOR.

1.

"And where now, Bayard, will thy footsteps
tend?"
My sister asked our guest one winter's day.
Smiling he answered in the Friends' sweet
way
Common to both: "Wherever thou shalt
send!
What wouldst thou have me see for thee?"
She laughed,
Her dark eyes dancing in the wood-fire's
glow:
"Loffoden isles, the Kilpis, and the low,
Unsetting sun on Finmark's fishing-craft."

"All these and more I soon shall see for thee!"
He answered cheerily: and he kept his pledge
On Lapland snows, the North Cape's windy wedge,
And Tromso freezing in its winter sea.
He went and came. But no man knows the track
Of his last journey, and he comes not back!

2.

He brought us wonders of the new and old;
We shared all climes with him. The Arab's tent
To him its story-telling secret lent.
And, pleased, we listened to the tales he told.
His task, beguiled with songs that shall endure,
In manly, honest thoroughness he wrought;
From humble home-lays to the heights of thought

Slowly he climbed, but every step was sure.
How, with the generous pride that friendship hath,
We, who so loved him, saw at last the crown
Of civic honor on his brows pressed down,
Rejoiced, and knew not that the gift was death.
And now for him, whose praise in deafened ears
Two nations speak, we answer but with tears!

3.

O Vale of Chester! trod by him so oft,
Green as thy June turf keep his memory. Let
Nor wood, nor dell, nor storied stream forget,
Nor winds that blow round lonely Cedarcroft;

Let the home voices greet him in the far,
Strange land that holds him; let the messages
Of love pursue him o'er the chartless seas
And unmapped vastness of his unknown star!
Love's language, heard beyond the loud discourse
Of perishable fame, in every sphere
Itself interprets; and its utterance here
Somewhere in God's unfolding universe
Shall reach our traveller, softening the surprise
Of his rapt gaze on unfamiliar skies!

A NAME.

TO G. W. P.

THE name the Gallic exile bore,
St. Malo! from thy ancient mart,
Became upon our Western shore
Greenleaf for Feuillevert.

A name to hear in soft accord
Of leaves by light winds overrun,
Or read, upon the greening sward
Of May, in shade and sun.

The name my infant ear first heard
Breathed softly with a mother's kiss;
His mother's own, no tenderer word
My father spake than this.

No child have I to bear it on;
Be thou its keeper; let it take
From gifts well used and duty done
New beauty for thy sake.

The fair ideals that outran
My halting footsteps seek and find —
The flawless symmetry of man,
The poise of heart and mind.

Stand firmly where I felt the sway
Of every wing that fancy flew,
See clearly where I groped my way,
Nor real from seeming knew.

And wisely choose, and bravely hold
Thy faith unswerved by cross or crown,
Like the stout Huguenot of old
Whose name to thee comes down.

As Marot's songs made glad the heart
Of that lone exile, haply mine
May in life's heavy hours impart
Some strength and hope to thine.

Yet when did Age transfer to Youth
The hard-gained lessons of its day?
Each lip must learn the taste of truth,
Each foot must feel its way.

We cannot hold the hands of choice
That touch or shun life's fateful keys;
The whisper of the inward voice
Is more than homilies.

Dear boy! for whom the flowers are born,
Stars shine, and happy song-birds sing,
What can my evening give to morn,
My winter to thy spring!

A life not void of pure intent,
With small desert of praise or blame,
The love I felt, the good I meant,
I leave thee with my name.

THE MINISTER'S DAUGHTER.

In the minister's morning sermon
He had told of the primal fall,
And how thenceforth the wrath of God
Rested on each and all.

And how, of His will and pleasure,
All souls, save a chosen few,
Were doomed to the quenchless burning,
And held in the way thereto.

Yet never by faith's unreason
A saintlier soul was tried,
And never the harsh old lesson
A tenderer heart belied.

And, after the painful service
On that pleasant Sabbath day,
He walked with his little daughter
Through the apple-bloom of May.

Sweet in the fresh green meadows
Sparrow and blackbird sung;
Above him their tinted petals
The blossoming orchards hung.

Around on the wonderful glory
The minister looked and smiled;
"How good is the Lord who gives us
These gifts from His hand, my child!

"Behold in the bloom of apples
And the violets in the sward
A hint of the old, lost beauty
Of the Garden of the Lord!"

Then up spake the little maiden,
Treading on snow and pink:
"O father! these pretty blossoms
Are very wicked, I think.

"Had there been no Garden of Eden
There never had been a fall;
And if never a tree had blossomed
God would have loved us all."

"Hush, child!" the father answered,
"By His decree man fell;
His ways are in clouds and darkness,
But He doeth all things well.

"And whether by His ordaining
To us cometh good or ill,
Joy or pain, or light or shadow,
We must fear and love Him still."

"Oh, I fear Him!" said the daughter,
"And I try to love Him, too;
But I wish He was good and gentle,
Kind and loving as you."

The minister groaned in spirit
As the tremulous lips of pain
And wide, wet eyes uplifted
Questioned his own in vain.

Bowing his head he pondered
The words of the little one;
Had he erred in his life-long teaching?
Had he wrong to his Master done?

To what grim and dreadful idol
Had he lent the holiest name?
Did his own heart, loving and human,
The God of his worship shame?

And lo! from the bloom and greenness,
From the tender skies above,
And the face of his little daughter,
He read a lesson of love.

No more as the cloudy terror
Of Sinai's mount of law,
But as Christ in the Syrian lilies
The vision of God he saw.

And, as when, in the clefts of Horeb,
Of old was His presence known,
The dread Ineffable Glory
Was Infinite Goodness alone.

Thereafter his hearers noted
In his prayers a tenderer strain,
And never the gospel of hatred
Burned on his lips again.

And the scoffing tongue was prayerful,
And the blinded eyes found sight,
And hearts, as flint aforetime,
Grew soft in his warmth and light.

MY TRUST.

A PICTURE memory brings to me:
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man gray grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

Gray grown, but in our Father's sight
A child still groping for the light
To read His works and ways aright.

I wait, in His good time to see
That as my mother dealt with me
So with His children dealeth He.

I bow myself beneath His hand:
That pain itself was wisely planned
I feel, and partly understand.

The joy that comes in sorrow's guise,
The sweet pains of self-sacrifice,
I would not have them otherwise.

And what were life and death if sin
Knew not the dread rebuke within,
The pang of merciful discipline?

Not with thy proud despair of old,
Crowned stoic of Rome's noblest mould!
Pleasure and pain alike I hold.

I suffer with no vain pretence
Of triumph over flesh and sense,
Yet trust the grievous providence,

How dark soe'er it seems, may tend,
By ways I cannot comprehend,
To some unguessed benignant end;

That every loss and lapse may gain
The clear-aired heights by steps of pain,
And never cross is borne in vain.

THE TRAILING ARBUTUS.

I WANDERED lonely where the pine-trees made
Against the bitter East their barricade,
And, guided by its sweet
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,
The trailing spring flower tinted like a shell
Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.

From under dead boughs, for whose loss the pines
Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming vines
Lifted their glad surprise,
While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless trees
His feathers ruffled by the chill sea-breeze,
And snow-drifts lingered under April skies.

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,
I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged and pent,
Which yet find room,
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day
And make the sad earth happier for their
bloom.

BY THEIR WORKS.

Call him not heretic whose works attest
His faith in goodness by no creed confessed.
Whatever in love's name is truly done
To free the bound and lift the fallen one,
Is done to Christ. Whoso in deed and word
Is not against Him, labors for our Lord.
When He, who, sad and weary, longing sore
For love's sweet service, sought the sisters' door,
One saw the heavenly, one the human guest,
But who shall say which loved the Master best?

THE WORD.

Voice of the Holy Spirit, making known
Man to himself, a witness swift and sure,
Warning, approving, true and wise and pure,
Counsel and guidance that misleadeth none!
By thee the mystery of life is read;
The picture-writing of the world's gray seers,
The myths and parables of the primal years,
Whose letter kills, by thee interpreted
Take healthful meanings fitted to our needs,
And in the soul's vernacular express
The common law of simple righteousness.
Hatred of cant and doubt of human creeds
May well be felt: the unpardonable sin
Is to deny the Word of God within!

THE BOOK.

Gallery of sacred pictures manifold,
A minster rich in holy effigies,
And bearing on entablature and frieze
The hieroglyphic oracles of old.
Along its transept aureoled martyrs sit;
And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
The eye with shrines of prophet, bard, and saint,
Their age-dimmed tablets traced in doubtful writ!
But only when on form and word obscure
Falls from above the white supernal light
We read the mystic characters aright,
And life informs the silent portraiture,
Until we pause at last, awe-held, before
The One ineffable Face, love, wonder, and adore.

REQUIREMENT.

We live by Faith; but Faith is not the slave
Of text and legend. Reason's voice and God's,
Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways?
No knotted scourge nor sacrificial knife,
But the calm beauty of an ordered life
Whose very breathing is unworded praise! —
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is Good.

HELP.

Dream not O Soul, that easy is the task
Thus set before thee. If it proves at length,
As well it may, beyond thy natural strength,
Faint not, despair not. As a child may ask
A father, pray the Everlasting Good
For light and guidance midst the subtle snares
Of sin thick planted in life's thoroughfares,
For spiritual strength and moral hardihood;
Still listening, through the noise of time and sense,
To the still whisper of the Inward Word;
Bitter in blame, sweet in approval heard,
Itself its own confirming evidence:
To health of soul a voice to cheer and please,
To guilt the wrath of the Eumenides.

UTTERANCE.

But what avail inadequate words to reach
The innermost of Truth? Who shall essay,
Blinded and weak, to point and lead the way,
Or solve its mystery in familiar speech?
Yet, if it be that something not thy own,
Some shadow of the Thought to which our schemes,
Creeds, cult, and ritual are at best but dreams,
Is even to thy unworthiness made known,
Thou mayst not hide what yet thou shouldst not dare
To utter lightly, lest on lips of thine

The real seem false, the beauty undivine.
So, weighing duty in the scale of prayer,
Give what seems given thee. It may prove
a seed
Of goodness dropped in fallow-grounds of need.

INSCRIPTIONS.

ON A SUN-DIAL.

FOR DR. HENRY I. BOWDITCH.

WITH warning hand I mark Time's rapid flight
From life's glad morning to its solemn night;
Yet, through the dear God's love, I also show
There 's Light above me by the Shade below.

ON A FOUNTAIN.

FOR DOROTHEA L. DIX.

STRANGER and traveller
Drink freely, and bestow
A kindly thought on her
Who bade this fountain flow,

Yet hath no other claim
Than as the minister
Of blessing in God's name.
Drink, and in His peace go!

ORIENTAL MAXIMS.

PARAPHRASE OF SANSCRIT TRANSLATIONS.

THE INWARD JUDGE.

FROM "INSTITUTES OF MANU."

THE soul itself its awful witness is.
Say not in evil doing, "No one sees,"
And so offend the conscious One within,
Whose ear can hear the silences of sin
Ere they find voice, whose eyes unsleeping see
The secret motions of iniquity.

Nor in thy folly say, "I am alone."
For, seated in thy heart, as on a throne,

The ancient Judge and Witness liveth still,
To note thy act and thought; and as thy ill
Or good goes from thee, far beyond thy reach,
The solemn Doomsman's seal is set on each.

LAYING UP TREASURE.

FROM THE "MAHÀBHÁRATA."

BEFORE the Ender comes, whose charioteer
Is swift or slow Disease, lay up each year
Thy harvests of well-doing, wealth that kings
Nor thieves can take away. When all the things
Thou callest thine, goods, pleasures, honors fall,
Thou in thy virtue shalt survive them all.

CONDUCT.

FROM THE "MAHÀBHÁRATA."

HEED how thou livest. Do no act by day
Which from the night shall drive thy peace
away.
In months of sun so live that months of
rain
Shall still be happy. Evermore restrain
Evil and cherish good, so shall there be
Another and a happier life for thee.

NOTES.

[1] This ballad, originally written for J. R. Osgood & Co.'s *Memorial History of Boston*, describes, with pardonable poetic license, a memorable incident in the annals of the city. The interview between Shattuck and the Governor took place, I have since learned, in the residence of the latter, and not in the Council Chamber.

[2] This name in some parts of Europe is given to the season we call Indian Summer, in honor of the good St. Martin. The title of the poem was suggested by the fact that the day it refers to was the exact date of the Saint's birth, the 11th of November.

[3] See *Tylor's Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. pp. 32, 33. Also *Journal of Asiatic Society*, vol. iv. p. 795.

[4] The picturesquely situated Wayside Inn at West Ossipee, N. H., is now in ashes; and to its former guests these somewhat careless rhymes may be a not unwelcome reminder of pleasant summers and autumns on the banks of the Bearcamp and Chocorua. To the author himself they have a special interest from the fact that they were written, or improvised, under the eye, and for the amusement of a beloved invalid friend whose last earthly sunsets faded from the mountain ranges of Ossipee and Sandwich.

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